informações
**TIMOR-LESTE**
**EAST TIMOR**
news

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SUBJECT MEMO No. 5/88

TL 822

Subject: An estimated 1 in 125 inhabitants imprisoned, tortured or murdered in 1985 and 1986 in East Timor

Source: The group "Peace is Possible in East Timor"

Summary

Official Indonesian reports, "clandestine" information, as well as other data enable the elaboration of a global estimate of the level of human rights violations in East Timor.

This estimate is justified by the blockade to which East Timor is subjected by Indonesia.

The exact number of victims is difficult to determine as some reports are imprecise. However, it may be conclude that 1 person in nearly every 125 was a victim of human rights abuses in 1985 and 1986.

Information from official Indonesian sources supplied th names of 198 Timorese political prisoners tried and sentenced by the Dili Court in 1985, 1986 and January/ February 1987. 46 of the people whose names were listed were also reported imprisoned or "disappeared" in information received from "clandestine" sources in East Timor. It follows, therefore, that the "clandestine" reports covering the 1985 and 1986 period provided information on 23% of the prisoners actually brought to trial.

Several conclusions could be drawn from these figures but, above all, we want to emphasise that, taking into account other data, this proportion is significant enough to permit a global estimate of the level of human rights violations in East Timor.

## Penetrating the Blockade

Estimating the violence carried out by Indonesia in East Timor is justified by the blockade to which the former subjects the territory it has militarily occupied since 1975. The U.S. State Department, which does not hesitat in referring to East Timor as Indonesia's "Province", describes the blockade as follows:

> "Telephone conversations to and from East Timor require special government approval. ..."
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> "Although correspondence generally is not monitored, letter mail to and from East Timor is subjected to official scrutiny. ..."
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> "Restrictions exist on movement to and within East Timor. ..."
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> "The government continued to permit selective access to the Province, primarily through escorted diplomati

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visits. ..."

(Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1987 - 1988 Edition.)

Under such circumstances it is difficult to know what is going on in the territory. We refer to as "clandestine" those reports, reaching abroad from a Timorese source, whose authors cannot be publicly identified (even when they are known) for fear of reprisals. The reliability of these reports, based on proven accuracy, has been established for years; they have been confirmed by information from various sources, including Indonesian sources when they announce that prisoners or "disappeared" have been sentenced or freed.

Known Violations

Information which managed to penetrate the blockade reported 165 instances of human rights violations, such as political imprisonment, torture, rape, "disappearances", killings, in the period 1985 and 1986. The sources generally give the date of the incident, place in which it occurred and the military forces involved.

With regard to the victims, their exact number is difficult to determine since the information is not always precise in this respect. In some cases the name, age, origins, and other details of the victim are supplied. However, at other times information is limited to numerical or qualitative indications. In this way we collected 439 names out of 1024 individual cases, but we have evidence that there have been more victims. The three following examples illustrate this:

1. Two brothers, pupils at the Baŭro school, were stabbed to death with knives by Batallion 323 soldiers because they had strayed away from the group they had been walking with.

2. 80 people, including 30 women, from Viqueque were arrested and taken in 2 trucks to the Hotel Flamboyan in Baucau - the Red Beret barracks and known torture centre. The report only gave one name, that of a 15-year-old girl, Sabina, who was successively raped by four officers until she lost consciousness.

3. On 21 November 1986 all males between the ages of 12 and 60 living in Iliomar were arrested in retaliation for an operation carried out by the Resistance. Those who were considered under suspicion were transferred to Kodim and tortured. Of these 17 were later bayonetted to death by 17 Zipur 19 Batallion soldiers in front of the population, which had been gathered specifically for the purpose and who had been threatened with death if any tears were shed. Only names of two victims out of the 17 were given: Jaime da Costa and Martinho Hornai, Iliomar's civil administrator and traditional chief respectively.

Out of these three incidents we managed to get only three names to add to the list of 439 names, even though we know there were 99 people involved (2 brothers, 80 people from Viqueque, and 17 men from Iliomar) which contribute to the total of 1024. Although we know there were more people involved (all the males in Iliomar between 12 and 60 years old) we prefer not to include them in the estimates since we are unaware of the exact number involved.

Estimate

The question is whether the 1024 registered cases of human rights violations represents a large or small proportion of the total abuses occurred in 1985 and 1986. Recalling that, in the case of the prisoners brought to trial, the "clandestine" information brought 23% of the total cases to our knowledge, we can reasonably assume that other violations are known about in similar proportion. It would be possible, therefore, to establish an estimate of 4400 (1024 x 100/23) cases of the type being considered. East Timor's total population being 550,000, this would mean that in the period 1985 and 1986 one Timorese in every 125 was arrested, tortured, raped, killed or "disappeared".

Generalised Violence against a People

Human rights organisations usually work on concrete cases of human rights violations as they occur or shortly afterwards to most effectively gain the support of public opinion and try to obtain results in this way. This working method is simply not appropriate in the case of East Timor. It was only applicable in the case of the four Timorese students held in Jakarta because reports concerning them got through the blockade which isolates East Timor.

In this context the delays incurred by the "clandestine" information coming from Timor favours the Indonesian government. In 1985 the latter managed to get the question of East Timor withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Commission's confidential procedure by claiming that the situation had improved and that it was willing to collaborate with humanitarian organisations.

The information given herein shows that both public opinion and governments were deceived.

In 1986 the deported detainees held in the most known about camps (Ataúro, Purgoa, Aileu) were released. The same happened in 1987 and beginning of 1988 to the 150 prisoners held in two Dili prisons. These deported detainees and prisoners, who had been visited by the International Red Cross, are now to be found in resettlement camp-villages "where they remain under the close supervision of local authorities", according to the aforementioned State Department Country Report. From what can be gleaned from available information it would seem reasonable to ask whether their situations improved on their "release". References to "ex-Ataúro" and "ex-prisoner" have been appearing fairly frequently in the reports of violations since the second half of 1986.

The level of violence maintained throughout 1985 and 1986, after over 10 years of war and occupation, cannot be classified at the same level as human rights violations which, regrettably occur in many other countries. The violence in East Timor is generalised and threatens the very existence of the people as a people, and it must be denounced as such.

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| | Timorese Sources | Indonesian Sources |
|---|---|---|
| prisoners tried | 46 | 198 |

| Violations in 1985/86 | Timorese Sources | Estimated on above basis |
|---|---|---|
| prisoners (no further details) | 172 | 740 |
| tortured | 703 | 3000 |
| women raped | 29 | 125 |
| "disappeared" | 25 | 100 |
| killed | 117 | 500 |
| total | 1024 | 4400 |

1. Of the 198 prisoners tried, whose names were supplied by Indonesian sources, 46 (23%) were known and reported by the Timorese sources.

2. The totals shown are less than the sum of the figures given. This is because some cases were of multiple violations (e.g. a person tortured and later killed).

Enclosures: list of known violations in 1985
list of known violations in 1986
list of political prisoners tried.